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FLOOR DEBATE

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not a business that is flush with cash, so we consistently have to measure value received for the money expended. I have sat here for 15 years on the floor of the Legislature and heard people talk about there being too many school districts in the state of Nebraska. We have something in excess of \$600 million in state aid funds, without special ed and other things, being expended to support K-12 education in the state. And this morning we're talking about a relatively small amount of money that has a significant impact on the number of school districts that will exist in the future across the state of Nebraska. Bear in mind, and it's a series of comments that you've heard before, I think that getting married or getting divorced is probably much easier than merging two communities, with all of the differences between communities. If you're not familiar with greater Nebraska, each of the communities is like meeting individual people, they all have their own personalities, their own wishes, their own affection for sports teams.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR COORDSEN: All of those community differences also have to be resolved before an effective, acceptable merger can be made between school houses. Merging children is easy; merging communities in most cases is quite difficult. I think that this bill, even though as committee counsel shared with me a few moments ago, it called for probably \$5 million if all of the mergers become effective over the period of the three years, is money that's well spent. It will come back, I think, in a much more efficient use of TEEOSA funds going out into the future. If that's not a good enough explanation, then we'll try something else, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK PRESIDING

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Coordsen. Those wishing to debate LB 313 are Senator Stuhr and Baker and one light just went off. Senator Stuhr, you're next.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I stand in support of LB 313 for many of the reasons that have been expressed already. I believe that many schools in our